

VZCZCXRO3912
OO RUEHCHI RUEHFK RUEHHM RUEHKS RUEHNAG RUEHPB
DE RUEHML #3847/01 3390827
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 050827Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9094
INFO RUEHZU/ASIAN PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0243

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 003847

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [SENV](#) [ENRG](#) [KGHG](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: Engaging The Philippines On Climate Change In The Run-Up To Bali, and Beyond

REF: State 00159374

¶1. Summary: Ambassador and country team have conveyed, publicly and privately, U.S. positions on climate change and the importance of the Bali meetings with senior officials and key audiences. Longstanding USG environmental programs and public diplomacy in support of the environment provide a ready platform for climate change messages. Philippine government officials are generally receptive to the U.S. message, have established a presidential task force and action plan, and could serve as useful partners for the U.S. Delegation in Bali. End Summary.

Climate Change in The Philippines

¶2. The Philippine Government stance on climate changes has generally followed that of the U.S. Recently, the climate change debate has heated up in the Philippines with release of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate 2007 Report.

¶3. The recently re-invigorated Presidential Task Force on Climate Change has the lead on the issue in the Philippines. The Task Force, commissioned to "address and mitigate the impact of climate change in the country" is chaired by Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes and includes the secretaries of environment and natural resources; science and technology; agriculture; defense; interior and local government; and education, as well as the chair of the Commission on Higher Education and two representatives of the private sector and civil society.

¶4. In October, the Philippines held a National Conference on Climate Change Adaptation. There, the Task Force launched the Philippine Climate Change Response Action Plan, which outlines various strategies on climate change and the role the Philippines will play to address climate change. The plan focuses on both mitigation (avoiding emissions) and adaptation (preparing for the effects of climate change).

¶5. The Philippine Government delegation to Bali will be headed by Environment Secretary Lito Atienza. Other senior officials include Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes, who will attend as Chairman of the Task Force, and Agriculture Secretary Art Yap.

Engagement with Government and NGOs

¶6. The Ambassador conveyed U.S positions on climate change and the Bali meetings with Task Force Chair Reyes. Reyes was receptive to U.S. views on climate change and agreed on the importance of the Bali meeting. He said he looked forward to working with the U.S. Delegation in Bali.

¶7. The Philippine Secretaries of Environment and Agriculture are currently out of the country. The Ambassador will reach out to them when they return to Manila and before they leave for Bali on December 10. Econoffs and USAID have also discussed the upcoming Bali meetings with decision-makers in various Philippine agencies and leaders of civil society organizations to discuss the role and positions the U.S. will take in Bali and the U.S. government's

long-term commitment to tackle this serious challenge. Their response was overwhelmingly positive.

USG Environmental Programs as Platforms for Public Messages

¶18. The USG enjoys a close working relationship with government, private sector and civil society in the energy and environment sectors. USAID's development assistance program has long supported Philippine government efforts on climate-linked issues, such as promoting renewable energy and cleaner fuels and forest management. These relationships, particularly those with the energy and environment departments, provide the USG with an open, effective, and continuous channel for discussing and shaping climate change thinking in the Philippines.

¶19. Given this relationship, from the Chief of Mission to technical staff level, Post routinely uses events, conferences, and informal dialogue to communicate climate change messages and help identify appropriate solutions for the country. The Ambassador has taken advantage of recent opportunities in print, television, and radio throughout the Philippines to voice U.S. concern and educate the Philippine public about U.S. actions to mitigate climate change. Last May, Ambassador Kenney delivered numerous climate-friendly messages on the occasion of Earth Day. Last month, in Zamboanga, Mindanao, Ambassador Kenney responded to climate change questions from the press. This week, the Ambassador travels to Banaue in Northern Luzon and will use the opportunity to increase press coverage of the Bali meeting and the U.S. position.

¶10. In October, Embassy Officers participated in the National Conference on Climate Change Adaptation, engaging dozens of stakeholders on climate change issues. On November 27, USAID and the Department of Energy held an Annual Program Review, during which continued assistance on climate change-related issues was discussed.

MANILA 00003847 002 OF 002

Through USAID, Post will continue to be involved in addressing climate change-linked issues, including further development and implementation of the Philippine Climate Change Response Action Plan.

¶11. Comment: We find the Philippine government and population to be broadly in agreement with the U.S. view on climate change. Though the Philippines is not a key player on this issue, given the harmony of viewpoint, together with a longstanding history of development assistance to the country on climate change, the U.S. Delegation may find it worthwhile to reach out to its Philippine counterparts as a friendly partner in Bali.

Kenney